

BOOK REVIEWS

John M. Porter, MD, Book Review Section Editor

Complete guide to part B billing and compliance
Reston, Va; 1998; St Anthony's; \$199.00.

The fraud and abuse enforcement environment has become far more of a threat than ever in the history of the Medicare program. The billing methods for your services with these regulations are more complex today than ever before, and the risk of error is greater as a result. It is more important than ever to have a complete understanding of the Medicare regulations to assure your billing practice is in compliance with the existing regulations.

St Anthony's "Complete guide to part B billing and compliance" provides a thorough explanation of all aspects of the Medicare part B program. It is complete and addresses such issues as HCFA regulations, how to bill for services under the Medicare program, the requirements of an HCFA 1500 billing form, how to challenge denied services by Medicare, and many other issues.

The initial section of this manual addresses the history of fraud and abuse legislation and current and future initiatives set forth by the federal government. In addition, it provides guidance on how to establish a compliance program and how to develop an internal audit process for monitoring compliance with Medicare regulations.

After the introduction to the laws, there is a directory of policies and current regulations to be followed when coding and billing for services. Each of the policies addressed are categorized in alphabetical order to allow the reader to use this section as a future reference. There is instant and easy access to information, including fraud initiatives associated with each of the policies discussed. There is a complete list of references at the end of each discussion that can be used for those occasions when you may want additional information regarding the issue or you would like to review the original documentation provided by Medicare. St Anthony's also has included publication software that can be used to set up an internal audit process that will assist with monitoring accuracy of billing. In addition, this software will assist in identifying those areas that may need additional training to ensure compliance.

This is a generally complete manual for use by all who bill professional services to Medicare part B. Those associated with hospitals and academic institutions must be sure to read the directory of specific services, especially as it relates to nonphysician services, along with the sections on "incident to" services and "teaching physicians" before applying any of the rules associated with nonphysician services (ie, physician assistants, nurse, technicians). Individual relationships with hospitals may alter the methods of billing for the nonphysician services with the Medicare program.

St Anthony's "Complete guide to part B billing and compliance," is thorough in addressing the various aspects of the

Medicare part B program but might be nicely supplemented with the "Non-Physician Practitioner Reimbursement Handbook" published by part B News, which addresses the issues of nonphysician billing in thorough detail.

*Bobbie Clawson
University Medical Group
Oregon Health Sciences University*

Management of hypertension, 7th ed

Norman Kaplan; Dallas; 1998; EMIS, Inc; 236 pages.

"Management of hypertension" is one of those small paperback books that are most likely to be found stuffed in the overflowing white coat pockets of medical students and residents. It includes a series of short chapters that contain numerous summary tables and diagrams, along with a handy center index that makes it easy to find any particular subject of interest. The fact that this book is now in a 7th edition is ample testimony to its popularity.

Although hypertension is recognized as one of the most prevalent and significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease, the management of hypertension is a rapidly changing field. Even the definition of clinical hypertension has been revised in recent years. Although the threshold for hypertension has traditionally been 140/90 mm Hg, the 1997 Joint National Committee recommended that a blood pressure of less than 130/85 mm Hg be considered normal. Fortunately, therapeutic decisions for patients with hypertension can now be made on the basis of solid data from a growing list of randomized clinical trials. However, it is a daunting task for any physician, especially those of us whose primary focus is not on hypertension, to keep up with the massive amount of literature on this topic. These circumstances have clearly created an ongoing need for this book.

The overall scope of material is impressive. Blood pressure management, types of hypertension, and diagnostic considerations are covered in the initial chapters. After a brief discussion of nondrug therapy for hypertension, the largest portion of the book is devoted to pharmacologic management, organized according to mechanism of drug action. Several summary chapters then outline general and specific approaches to therapy with single and multiple drugs. The book concludes with a series of chapters on the side effects of drug therapy, resistant hypertension, hypertensive crises, and special patients with hypertension. The latter group includes children, the elderly, and patients with diabetes, dyslipidemias, renal insufficiency, and cardiac or cerebrovascular disease. There is even a self-assessment quiz at the end of the book that, for a small fee, can be used to earn 5 category 1 CME credits through the University of Texas at Dallas.

While this compact volume is comprehensive, it makes no pretense of being a complete textbook. Still, it is remarkably up-to-date, with many citations to articles published in 1997. As pointed out in the foreword, readers who require additional information can refer to Dr Kaplan's larger book "Clinical Hypertension," which, coincidentally, is also in its 7th edition.

"Management of hypertension" will serve as a practical reference for all clinicians who care for patients with hypertension, either in a primary care or specialty setting. The outline and summary format will have particular appeal to medical students and residents, but the information presented will also be of value to more experienced physicians—and it will not take up much space in your pocket.

*R. Eugene Zierler, MD
University of Washington Medical Center
Department of Surgery
Seattle, Wash*

WebDoctor: your online guide to health care and wellness

Richard Sharp, Vicki Sharp; St Louis; 1998; QMP; 557 pages; \$28.00.

Although this book contains 557 pages and is accompanied by a CD-ROM with 45.7 megabytes of data on it, the narrative portion contains only 9 pages. Most of the text is an encyclopedic compilation of the medical sites on the worldwide web (WWW).

The goal of the authors is to provide consumers, medical doctors, and health care professionals with web sites that will expand and enrich their medical knowledge. This goal, particularly for consumers, has been met generally by this text. The web sites are categorized by subjects, and each site has a brief description of its contents. The accompanying CD-ROM has the links available as an index, which circumvents the need for typing each link of interest. The electronic links worked well on my system.

A major problem with the medical information that is on the WWW is that there is no regulation of content. This book nicely sidesteps that issue by providing, particularly to consumers, web sites that are screened by the authors for content.

I am pleased to see such a book in print and available to consumers. I am not sure what value it will have for medical professionals. In each professional's field, there is little available on the WWW that is not already known. Outside a professional's field, a referral to a standard text or to a colleague may be better than the WWW. As far as the field of vascular surgery, there are no links to any web sites of interest, including no link to the web page of the joint societies.

In conclusion, this is an excellent guide and starting point for the consumer to locate medical sites on the WWW. Because of the limited reliability and value of med-

ical information on the WWW, its usefulness for vascular surgeons and for most specialists is limited.

*James M. Edwards, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery
Oregon Health Sciences University
Portland, Ore*

Modern surgical care: physiologic foundations and clinical applications, 2nd ed

Thomas Miller; St Louis; 1998; QMP; 1454 pages; \$145.00.

This comprehensive, multi-authored text is a unique book that is focused on the physiologic basis of surgical care. This second edition has been revised with several improvements from the original. The text has contributions from more than 80 authors and approaches surgical disease as a derangement in normal physiology. The contributing authors have made significant clinical contributions in their respective fields and are also fully current on the physiologic processes that are pertinent to the topics presented. The book is divided into 9 sections, with the first section devoted to general considerations in the management of surgical patients. The remaining 8 sections are focused on specific organ systems, which include the alimentary tract, the cardiothoracic system, the urinary system, the central and peripheral nervous systems, the peripheral vascular system, the endocrine system, the integument, and the body wall. The last section concerns special physiologic considerations (ie, pediatric patients, elderly patients, and morbidly obese patients).

The strength of this textbook is that the breadth and the depth of the physiologic topics that are covered give the reader a single resource to review for a comprehensive understanding. The only weakness is perhaps the size. Each of the chapters is exhaustively referenced for further in-depth reading. The textbook is full of illustrations, including schematic diagrams, radiographs, and anatomic sketches that augment the detailed text.

The overall value of a text of this nature is self-evident, and its purchase is strongly endorsed. The main role of this textbook is in surgical education, particularly in the training of surgical residents who require a broad, general perspective of basic mechanisms underlying surgical disease. It would undoubtedly be valuable for the preparation for in-training examinations in surgery and for the certification examinations in surgery.

*Peter G. Kalman, MD
The Toronto Hospital—General Division
Toronto, Ontario
Canada*

Vascular endothelium: pharmacologic and genetic manipulations

John Catravas, Allan Callow, Una Ryan; New York City; 1998; Plenum; 300 pages.